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# Articles in Today's Clips

**Wednesday, May 21, 2008**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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# THE BAY CITY TIMES

## Court asked to reinstate Yost's murder conviction

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

By CRYSTAL McMORRIS

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The Bay County Prosecutor's Office has asked the state's highest court to reinstate the murder conviction and life sentence against Donna A. Yost, accusing her defense attorney of "gamesmanship and sandbagging" and accusing the appeals court of "bending over backwards" to find a reason to throw out her conviction.

Bay County Prosecutor Kurt C. Asbury and Assistant Prosecutor Sylvia M. Linton argue in a legal brief that the Court of Appeals, in reversing the jury's decision, misinterpreted the law.

Monique Yost, 7, died on Oct. 10, 1999, at her home in Bay City and autopsy results showed the death was a result of an overdose of anti-depressant medication.

The court of appeals reversed the jury's conviction of Yost in a ruling issued March 27, declaring that Judge William J. Caprathe "should have permitted defendant to present evidence about her limited intellectual functioning, should have allowed defendant to call a toxicologist, and erred when it permitted the prosecution to elicit testimony about defendant's involvement with Child Protective Services without appropriately limiting the nature and extent of the testimony."

The court of appeals ruled that Caprathe "abused his discretion" by preventing Roxanne Davis, Yost's oldest daughter, from "testifying about defendant's poor communication skills and how they might seem unusual based on her 'slowness.'"

Prosecutors argue that evidence of "limited capacity" of a defendant cannot be used, short of legal insanity, as a defense argument.

"Roxanne is not qualified to testify as to how

her mother's limited

intellectual capabilities might cause her to engage in behaviors that seem "unusual," Linton wrote.

The judge also prevented a psychologist from discussing Yost's "limited intellectual functioning" and how that might have impacted her behavior.

Prosecutors contend that even if the exclusion of testimony from Davis and others about Yost's intellect was in error, the error was "harmless" and did not determine the outcome of the trial.

The next point taken up in the 44-page brief is Caprathe's refusal of a "last-minute request" by defense attorney Edward M. Czuprynski to add an expert toxicologist to his witness list. Prosecutors accuse Czuprynski of committing "strategic discovery violations" and the appeals court of "creating an appellate parachute."

Caprathe refused to allow Czuprynski to add as a witness a toxicologist that was expected to have presented testimony indicating that the medication was not fatal to Monique.

Linton alleges that the late-breaking witness attempt was not based on forgetfulness or new information, and "this is a case wherein defense counsel engaged in strategic gamesmanship and sandbagging in order to secure a prejudicial and unfair advantage."

Czuprynski said this morning that he hasn't reviewed the entire brief, but that he disagrees with the classification of his trial tactics.

"The only gamesmanship I saw was the tag team between the judge and the prosecutor," Czuprynski said this morning. "And there was no sandbagging. It was a late-breaking discovery that the judge wrongfully excluded, and the court of appeals said so."

The appeals court also ruled it was inappropriate for Caprathe to allow prosecutors to present testimony about Yost's alleged history of domestic violence. Linton argues that the evidence was appropriate and also notes that since the trial, state law has changed to become more supportive of presenting trial testimony about past domestic violence involving criminal defendants.

The Supreme Court will decide whether to hear the appeal, and, if it does, will schedule oral arguments in Lansing.

In the meantime, Yost remains incarcerated in the Scott Correctional Facility in Plymouth.

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**<a href="http://www.gthermal.com/local/local\_story\_141201528.html">Concert benefits youth leaving foster care</a>**

**By Lisa Perkins**  
lperkins@record-eagle.com

Wed, May 21 2008

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Navigating the road to independence after leaving foster care is difficult at best. The Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative of Northwest Michigan is doing everything it can to help point young adults facing this turning point in the right direction.

The group will host a Jam For Youth concert from 7 to 10:30 p.m., Thursday, May 29 at the City Opera House in Traverse City to draw attention to the challenges faced by the 14 to 23 year old youth who must fend for themselves once leaving the foster care system. All proceeds from the event will be used to help meet their emergency needs.

"This gives people an easy way to plug in and be a support to these kids," said Marco Dedenbach, MYOI community coordinator for the 10 county northern Michigan region.

"There are so many things people can do to help -- from being on an action list to driving with someone who needs hours to get their license. Everything helps," said Dedenbach who planned the concert to coincide with National Foster Care Month.

Featured performers at the benefit concert are all part of the Earthword Music Collective whose mission is to use music to raise community and self-awareness. Headlining the event is Joshua Davis and the Fool Rooster Band. They will be joined by the duo Breathe Owl Breathe, Brandon Foote and Laura Bates and singer-songwriter Chris Dorman.

Community partners of MYOI, Grand Traverse Pie Company and Higher Grounds Trading Company, will provide pie and coffee during the event.

Tickets are now on sale at the City Opera House box office, Grand Traverse Pie Company and Higher Grounds Trading Company Coffeehouse and are \$18 in advance or \$20 at the door.

For more information, visit [JamForYouth.com](http://JamForYouth.com) or call 922-5276.

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Photos



Laura Bates and Brandon Foote are among the performers scheduled to appear during the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative Jam for Youth concert on Thursday, May 29 at the Traverse City Opera House. Special to the Record-Eagle



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## Muskegon Chronicle

### Teens busted twice for stealing cars from same dealership

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

By Lisa Medendorp

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MUSKEGON COUNTY -- Stealing trucks and cars from at least one area dealership apparently became a habit for two teens who were busted not once, but twice, in less than a week.

This morning, one of the teens was in the Muskegon County Juvenile Detention Center, but a second suspect was not kept at the juvenile home, due to overcrowding, according to police.

Investigators also were seeking to question a third teen who was released from the Muskegon County Jail on a personal recognizance bond after being arrested Friday night with the other two boys.

Norton Shores police first arrested the three suspects Friday after a break-in and attempted vehicle thefts at Betten Family Auto Center, 3146 Henry.

The younger two suspects -- juveniles ages 14 and 15 -- were released afterward to a parent or guardian. The third suspect, a 17-year-old, was lodged at the Muskegon County Jail.

However, it was "deja vu" early this morning, when the younger boys were arrested with a stolen vehicle from the same dealership after fleeing from Roosevelt Park police around 12:50 a.m., according to Norton Shores police.

Roosevelt Park police attempted a traffic stop in the parking lot of Wal-Mart on Henry Street, but the Dodge Charger with two occupants fled the scene.

The chase ended at Hoyt Street and Maplewood Avenue in Muskegon Heights, where with the assistance of Muskegon Heights police, the 14- and 15-year-olds were taken into custody.

The Dodge Charger had been stolen from Family Auto Center, along with a Chrysler Pacifica and a Dodge Ram pickup truck, said Detective Lt. Timothy LaVigne.

The Pacifica had broken down and the suspect driving the Dodge Charger had picked up his friend, police said. Police this morning were continuing to look for the pickup truck, which is gray or silver in color.

Norton Shores police found a window had been broken to gain entry to the dealership this morning.

On Friday, police responded to an alarm at 11:14 p.m. at Betten Family Auto Center. Two vehicles and a service door were damaged.

An officer arriving to check an alarm apparently startled the suspects, who had driven a 2005 Dodge Ram pickup truck to an area near the back fence. "It was parked like it was ready to go," said Norton Shores Lt. Jon Gale.

Subsequent investigation led police to the 14- and 15-year-olds, and the older teen.

Danaveous Davis, 17, of 2929 Fifth, faces charges on a warrant that was issued for breaking and entering of a building and vehicle theft. He was released from the Muskegon County Jail on a \$1,000 personal recognizance bond prior to arraignment. An arraignment date was set for June 2.



Muskegon police also have been investigating vehicle thefts from Betten Chevrolet Cadillac, 2474 Henry.

Detective Sgt. Monica Shirey said at least eight reports have been received. Two of the stolen vehicles were recovered in the 2900 block of Fifth Street.

One, a 2006 Chevrolet Tahoe, was found in a vacant garage at 2925 Fifth, Shirey said. On Sunday night, the home at 2925 Fifth was destroyed by a spectacular fire. The cause this morning remains undetermined.

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# Shot in head, Saginaw man expected to recover after girlfriend attacked him, police say

by Dean Bohn | The Saginaw News

Wednesday May 21, 2008, 6:18 AM

Despite getting hit in the forehead with a .45-caliber slug during a domestic dispute, a 34-year-old Saginaw man has a good chance at surviving without any permanent harm -- except the scars, police officials say.

The man -- who also suffered a gunshot wound to the inner thigh -- was in a Saginaw hospital in critical condition Tuesday afternoon.

Bridgeport Township police just after 2 a.m. Tuesday answered a 911 call from a woman at 2093 California reporting a man was shot, said Acting Sgt. Brandon McAllister.

"The woman gave her name as Michelle, but there was no Michelle located or identified," McAllister said, saying the caller likely was the man's 25-year-old Saginaw girlfriend.

Police suspect she fired the shots, then gave a false name.

One bullet from the semi-automatic handgun entered the man's forehead, traveled along the inside of his skull and exited the right side of his head near the ear.

"The doctor said he has a minor contusion to the brain in one lobe and so far there is no brain swelling, but we have to wait up to 72 hours to see if any swelling develops," he said.

The other slug entered the left rear hip area and exited through his inner thigh, McAllister said.

The shooter left the residence before police arrived, but Saginaw police arrested a woman at 2:40 a.m. near the Buena Vista Township intersection of Bertha and Eva.

"She initially was claiming it was an abusive relationship, but then she started asking for a lawyer," McAllister said.

"She's lodged in jail for attempted murder, and we expect to have the warrant filed (today)."

McAllister said the shooting victim has a criminal record that includes domestic abuse. The woman does not have a criminal history, he said.

# THE MINING Journal

## Local News

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### Linklater gets 27 years in prison

By KIM HOYUM, Journal Staff Writer

*POSTED: May 21, 2008*

MARQUETTE — An Ontario man was sentenced to more than 27 years in prison Tuesday for killing his newlywed wife last summer in Hannahville.

U.S. District Judge Paul L. Maloney made an upward departure from sentencing guidelines, sending Derek Joseph Linklater, 26, of North Spirit Lake, Ontario, to federal prison for 27 years and three months. He then will have five years of supervised release. The court also ordered substance abuse, mental health, educational and vocational counseling for Linklater.

Linklater pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in January in the death of Loretta Lea Wandahsega, 34, a member of the Potawatomi Indian Tribe at Hannahville.

In his plea agreement, Linklater admitted he caused Wandahsega's death in the early morning hours of July 12 by repeatedly striking her in the face and head. The two had been married the previous day at Wandahsega's home.

Wandahsega's death was determined in an autopsy to have been caused by blunt force trauma to the head, resulting in a brain hemorrhage.

U.S. Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Paul Lochner said the nature and circumstances of the beating warranted classification as extreme conduct, which would increase the sentence. He described the events of the couple's wedding day and night, ending in an argument over Linklater going to a party instead of spending the wedding night with Wandahsega.

Maloney said his departure from the original guidelines, which would have called for Linklater to serve between 14 and 17½ years, was due to Linklater's criminal history and extreme conduct in the commission of the crime. The sentence he gave was the maximum available with the departures.

He said Linklater's history showed a pattern of assaulting women and police officers, including a similar incident in 2006 when he was convicted of assault with intent to do great bodily harm. The victim, Lochner said, was a 41-year-old woman who described Linklater as her common-law husband. In that case, Lochner said, the woman was also beaten into unconsciousness, but survived.

#### Article Photos



LINKLATER

Defense attorney Paul Peterson of Marquette represented Linklater and said he and his client had no objections to the departure for criminal history, but did not believe there was extreme conduct involved in the death that was substantially different from other similar cases.

"We would submit that there really doesn't seem to be a finding that this case is outside the heartland of second-degree murder cases," Peterson argued.

He asked Maloney to keep the sentence guidelines at a maximum of 21 years and 10 months, but Maloney found there was reason to go higher.

Maloney said one reason for determining there was extreme conduct in the case was that Linklater had the opportunity to call for medical attention for Wandahsega before she died, but did not do so.

He noted that according to the forensic pathology report, Wandahsega probably survived the beating for between one to three hours before dying of her injuries.

That information was met with sobs from some of Wandahsega's family and friends, who attended the sentencing.

Some spoke to the judge, asking for the maximum sentence possible and describing the impact her death had on her son, family and the tribal community.

"Speaking on behalf of the whole family, there are no words I can say that express the hurt this animal put us through. The whole community are her brothers and sisters," Warren Wandahsega said. "I just wish there was some way he could be repaid for the hurt that was done."

Linklater was arrested July 12 on a Delta County charge of aggravated assault, and later indicted by a federal grand jury in Marquette on the second-degree murder charge.

He had originally pleaded not guilty and would have faced trial in February.

Linklater's statement to the court before sentencing was quiet and measured, as he apologized and said he took responsibility for his actions.

"I never thought Loretta would lose her life because of me," he said. "I would like to apologize to Loretta's family and her son Desmond. I am so very sorry... There is no one person at fault except myself. As I stand here before you today, I feel this is the right place for me to be, so the people I have wronged can start their healing."

Maloney said he believed the statement was sincere, but came too late.

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# Convicted sex offender, Jeffery L. Rosencrants, faces sexual assault charges against stepmother with Alzheimer's disease

by Bryn Mickle | The Flint Journal

Wednesday May 21, 2008, 10:00 AM

**RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP, Michigan** -- A convicted sex offender is suspected of sexually assaulting his elderly stepmother who suffers from Alzheimer's disease.

Jeffery L. Rosencrants, 41, is expected to be arraigned today on four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct with a vulnerable adult, charges that carry the possibility of life in prison.

The alleged assaults began after Rosencrants moved into his father's Richfield Township home when he got out of prison in September, police said.

Rosencrants spent 12 years in prison for third-degree criminal sexual conduct involving children, police said.

An investigation by the Genesee County Sheriff's Department revealed that Rosencrants allegedly began having sex with his 68-year-old stepmother even though he knew she suffered from dementia related to her Alzheimer's disease.

The father threw him out of the house and called police in March after he found Rosencrants sleeping in his wife's bed.



Robert J. Pickell

Although Rosencrants was alone then, Genesee County Sheriff Robert J. Pickell said the father had become suspicious about what was going on in the house.

The allegations were referred to the Genesee County Elder Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Team, which opened a two-month investigation.

"These are very difficult cases," said Pickell, who said investigators had to coordinate mental examinations for the alleged victim.

Rosencrants, however, has not been free during the probe. He was jailed last month on charges of failing to register as a sex offender.

Pickell said the arrest underscores the need to look out for senior citizens in the community.

A recent study of Michigan and 18 other states showed 1 percent of adults 60 and older are sexually abused, said Pickell.

"This is the first time (the county elder abuse task force) has had a case of sexual exploitation," said Pickell.

The task force was formed last year to deal with crimes against the elderly in Genesee County.

# \$1 MILLION IN HELP

*Blue Cross to give free clinics around state a boost for 4th straight year*

## DETROIT

By PATRICIA ANSTETT  
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

Uninsured and out of work, Gaynella Green's blood pressure spiked, and her diabetes went out of control.

The staff at the Joy-Southfield Health Education Center, a free clinic in Detroit where she sought help last autumn, refused to let her leave until her blood pressure stabilized.

They talked to her about her life's stresses, discussed better eating habits to control her health problems and gave her seven free medicines. She has stayed out of emergency departments since.

"Every person is treated special here, as if they had a million dollars' worth of insurance," said Green, 61, who will finish school in June learning how to repair computers. She hopes to find a job with health benefits.

On Tuesday, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan announced \$1 million in grants to 42 free clinics throughout the state, a patchwork of programs that provide primary care for uninsured and underinsured Michigan residents. It's the fourth consecutive year for the programs.

The Blue Cross grants are the only reason some clinics stay open, said Charissa Shawcross, a nurse practitioner and director of health services at Joy-Southfield and board member of the Free Clinics of Michigan.

Many free clinics are so strapped they can't take new patients, Shawcross said. Some have closed just as others open. Joy-Southfield has a six-week wait for new patients.

"Free clinics are the safety net of the safety net," said David Law, executive director.

Blue Cross will give \$22,430



Photos by REGINA H. BOONE/Detroit Free Press

Gaynella Green, 61, is a patient at the Joy-Southfield clinic in Detroit, which is to receive \$22,430 from Blue Cross. "Every person is treated special here, as if they had a million dollars' worth of insurance," she said.



Lynda Rossi, vice president of public policy and social mission for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, listens Tuesday as Charissa Shawcross, director of health services at the Joy-Southfield clinic, talks about how the clinic will benefit from grant money from Blue Cross.

to Joy-Southfield. The clinic is tucked in a new building with a bright blue sign in a once-

thriving residential neighborhood, near the razed Marvin Gardens public housing pro-

## Need a free clinic?

To find a free clinic, dial 211, a new United Way service. Statewide listings are at [www.fcmi.org](http://www.fcmi.org).

The Joy-Southfield clinic can be reached at 313-581-7773 or [www.joysouthfield.org](http://www.joysouthfield.org).

ject.

A third of the clients at the clinic work but can't afford to pay monthly insurance premiums, Law said. Three-fourths of its patients live in Detroit.

The clinic needs more health care volunteers and physician specialists willing to take referrals. It would like to offer mental health counseling and dental care someday. Trinity Health and Children's Hospital of Michigan supplement key clinic functions.

Patients are encouraged to make donations in a box in the waiting room, and "most of them do give something, even if it's a dollar," Shawcross said.

Contact PATRICIA ANSTETT at [panstett@freepress.com](mailto:panstett@freepress.com).



## Two clinics win grants to help the uninsured

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

By **Monetta L. Harr**

**mharr@citpat.com -- 768-4972**

Dove Health Alliance and St. Luke's Clinic each will receive grants of \$22,439 from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Blue Cross announced Tuesday it is distributing \$1 million in grants to 42 free clinics in the state. Those serve more than 90,000 uninsured people.

Dian Breining, director of Dove Health Alliance, 1200 N. West Ave., said the grant means they will join with Smiles on Wheels, a mobile dental-hygiene program started last year by three area hygienists.

Breining anticipates Smiles on Wheels will move into Dove's offices by mid-June and treat children and adults there as well as travel around the community.

"They did more than 800 exams last year and our goal is to add 500 new patients this year. But we may go as high as 1,000 clients," said Breining.

The hygienists do cleanings, X-rays, fluoride treatments and sealants. More extensive work is referred to local dentists.

Some of the Blue Cross grant also will be funded into health fairs, especially one planned for autumn.

All money is appreciated, said Joyce Hardy, coordinator of Free Clinics of Michigan. She said "13 percent of 8.9 million people in Michigan are without health insurance, and that pretty much tells the story."

Things are so economically bad in Michigan, Hardy said a new free clinic could open every week for many weeks and still not serve everyone in need.

"Many clinics aren't even accepting new patients. We have people who haven't seen a dentist in 20 years," she said. "The working poor are coming in, people who have jobs but can't meet the co-pay on their insurance."

This is the fourth year in a row Blue Cross has donated money to clinics as a "safety net for doctors, dentists and nurses volunteering in these free clinics," said Lynda Rossi, vice president of public policy and social mission for the insurance company.

Dr. James A. O'Connor, medical director at St. Luke's Clinic, 132 Seymour Ave., was not available for comment, but in a press release from Blue Cross, he said the grant money will be used for its prescription medication program and diagnostic and office equipment.

"We have more than 16,000 medically uninsured in Jackson County and many of whom we serve have lost their homes. Demand for our services has gone up dramatically since opening our new clinic," O'Connor said in the release.

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# THE BAY CITY TIMES

## County health care tax proposal sparks debate

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

By RYAN J. STANTON

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Essexville resident Scott Wittbrodt urged Bay County commissioners on Tuesday to vote "no" on a resolution that would place a new tax proposal on the Nov. 4 ballot.

"If this community is truly in need of the services this millage will provide, a petition drive should be the avenue for which this millage makes it to the ballot," he said, addressing the County Board's Human Services Committee.

The idea of a countywide property tax to fund health care programs for low-income, uninsured county residents has received mixed reaction since being introduced a week ago.

And Tuesday's input left commissioners with more to think about.

"It's going to be - by my survey - a tough decision for this board to make," said County Board Chairman Patrick H. Beson, D-2nd District.

After hearing from another county resident, Mike Rowley, commissioners voted unanimously to refer the issue to the June 10 meeting of the full board. They previously had planned on acting Tuesday at a special meeting immediately following committee approval.

"I think it merits more discussion if it truly is that important," Rowley told commissioners, proposing alternatives to a tax.

The millage proposal was first made public last week when officials from the Bay Health Plan and the Helen M. Nickless Volunteer Clinic addressed the County Board about the growing need to cover the uninsured of Bay County.

"Right now we are turning away hundreds of people that are needing help," said Linda Hamacher, executive director of the Bay Health Plan, a public-private program to cover the uninsured of Bay County.

County officials did not provide a breakdown of the plan's current budget, but in the past they have said the plan is funded by a mix of local, state and federal dollars - including hospital grants. Provisions in federal laws allow the county to leverage Medicaid dollars through Bay Health, meaning that for every dollar the county funnels through the program, the federal government writes a check back to the Bay Health Plan for 58 cents.

Hamacher says her program, which would reap the benefits of the millage, is in jeopardy because of limited funding. She said county residents can't afford to wait for the state or federal government "to step up and do their jobs."

The Bay Health Plan currently covers about 1,700 people, and enrollment is shrinking with funding drying up. With the millage, however, the plan would be able to cover 90 percent of the county's uninsured who earn up to \$20,800 a year, or twice the federal poverty level.

After seeing a presentation from Hamacher last week, commissioners drafted a resolution in favor of the millage that they were expected to act on - but held off on - at Tuesday's meeting.

Commissioners said they want to hear input from the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and Bay Regional

Medical Center, among others. And they want more details from Hamacher.

The millage, if approved, will place a 0.67-mill tax on all property in Bay County for eight years. It would generate \$2 million and cost the owner of a \$100,000 home about \$33.50 a year.

Cautioning commissioners against taking action, Wittbrodt said voters might lose sight of the proposal on a crowded November ballot.

"There are few in this county that know this millage is being proposed and even fewer that know the parameters of it," he said, suggesting that voters might "consider this millage just another example of government officials dipping their hands into the citizens' pockets for yet another program the citizens cannot afford."

Hamacher reminded commissioners that time is of the essence. She encouraged them to put the issue to a vote so she can begin her quest to educate the public. She led a campaign in Genesee County two years ago that led to voters there adopting a similar millage.

Rowley, though uneasy about following in the footsteps of Flint, told commissioners he'd like to see everyone have access to health care, but he believes the best solution lies at the national level. He also said it could be confusing for voters to see the county's proposal in November if a statewide proposal makes it on the ballot.

As chief financial officer of Rowley Bros. Inc., Rowley observed that businesses are struggling to afford the increasing costs of health insurance. He suggested the county, in partnership with the private sector, look into starting a regional initiative and offer tax credits as an incentive to businesses that offer coverage to their employees.

A majority of county officials, however, still appear to favor the idea of a millage.

They say those who complain about paying a tax to support others in need must realize that they're already paying for the uninsured through higher insurance premiums - and those who truly cannot afford higher taxes likely qualify for the state's Homestead Property Tax Credit, which doesn't let your property taxes climb higher than 3.5 percent of your annual income.

"I think it's inhumane that people don't have health care ... that families have to decide whether to eat or go to the doctor," said Commissioner Kim Coonan, D-6th District, who championed a separate resolution adopted unanimously in committee on Tuesday, calling on national health care reform.

"I think we need to send this message to all 83 counties," he said, hoping that it spurs a groundswell of support on its way to Washington.

"Sometimes big things start at the local level," added Commissioner Brian K. Elder, D-7th District, who favors the millage idea.

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PUBLISHED: Sunday, May 18, 2008

## Community garden to feed and nourish souls

### St. Paul Lutheran Church offers plots to area residents

By **PHIL FOLEY**

Staff Reporter

LAPEER -- Faced with a rising tide of need at area food banks and soup kitchens, members of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lapeer have decided to transform a strip of vacant church land along Village West Drive into a community garden.

The project is the brainchild of the church's nurse, Judy Eick. She noted when the church bought the property more than a decade ago, a community garden was part of the church's master plan, but no one ever got around to doing it.

"We're living in a time when a dollar doesn't stretch as far as it needs to," said Pastor John Kaiser, adding the community garden, "will give people the opportunity to help themselves."

Eick noted that, if properly planted, a 10-square-foot garden plot can generate 100 pounds of food.

The church has created ten 10-by-20-foot garden plots and if the project is successful, it has room on the site for more than 100 plots.

"What bothers me," said Eick, "is that a lot of people say they want to participate, but they don't call."



(Photo by PHIL FOLEY) Hadley Township resident Ed Eick tills one of the 10 garden plots Lapeer's St. Paul Lutheran Church has put on its property along West Village Drive. The church is setting up a community garden to help take the sting out of tough economic times.

Eick said all people need to do is call the church at 664-6653; fill out an application; and pay a \$10 deposit. She said in addition to the plot, the church will supply plants and seeds. Even the basic tilling has already been done. Eick's husband, Ed, brought his tractor in from their Hadley Township home this week to prepare the plots.

"We're not out to make Lutherans," she said. "We're out to feed people." Eick said the church is asking gardeners to donate their surplus produce to the city's five soup kitchens.

Kaiser said the city's soup kitchens have been averaging 60 to 80 people a night in recent months.

"We help in so many ways. We were just looking for another way to help people," Pete Neumeyer said. "People can use our land to provide themselves with fresh vegetables." He added, "I know a lot of people who live in apartments," who don't have the opportunity to plant a garden.

Eick said the project is a collaborative effort with Love INC, adding several area businesses and institutions have joined in as well. She noted the Lapeer Library District Annex across the street is donating water; Family Dentistry West has donated a sign; and a local farmer has donated manure to improve the soil.

She added if gardeners clean their plot at the end of the season, the church will refund their \$10 deposit.

Along with stretching their food dollar, Eick said the project will also give people an opportunity to get to know their neighbors better. "We have so many people who are isolated these days," she said. "You know how easy it is to talk to kids when you're raking leaves?"

**'We're out to feed people,' said Judy Eick.**

Eick and Kaiser said the church's property is an ideal site for a community garden since there are at least seven apartment complexes, some of them low income, within a half-mile of the gardens.

Kaiser noted that some of the 45 acres the church owns on Lapeer's west side is already being farmed by a local farmer, but there's still plenty of room for expansion.

Neumeyer said organizers decided to start small this year. "We wanted to get organized, get a good feel for what we're doing," he said.

He said he and other volunteers from the church, including a master gardener, will be on hand to help people get started.

Nuemeyer, who has been gardening more than 30 years and maintains a big plot at his home, said he decided to get involve with the project when he heard about it from Eick because. "It's just such a good idea."

"Where this grows from here, lord only knows," Kaiser said.

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## Lansing man set to stand trial in fatal stabbing of homeless man

*ASSOCIATED PRESS*

PORT ALLEN, La. — The Louisiana Supreme Court has cleared the way for a Lansing, Mich., man to stand trial in the slaying of a homeless man in 2006.

Jury selection is scheduled to start today in Port Allen, La.

Twenty-nine-year-old Michael Garcia is being prosecuted on charges of first-degree murder, armed robbery, aggravated kidnapping and aggravated rape in the Feb. 8, 2006, attack.

Prosecutors say Garcia, his brother and another man discovered the victims sleeping at an abandoned service station near Port Allen.

Garcia is accused of fatally stabbing Matthew Millican after robbing him.

He also is accused of kidnapping Millican's female companion and participating in the rape of the woman.

The other two men accused in the case are scheduled to go on trial July 21 on lesser charges.

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